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Duty and Interest

UNITED

IN

PRAYER and PRAISE

FOR

Kings, and all that are in Authority.

From 1 *Tim.* II. 1, 2.

BEING A

SERMON

Preach'd at

WESTMINSTER,

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By *V. A.* Minister of the Gospel.

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Duty and Interest United in Prayer and Praise

FOR

The King, and all that are in Authority.

FROM

1 Tim. II. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men : for Kings and all that are in Authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

THE visible Degeneracy of what we call Religion from its Original in the Scripture, and its fairest Copy in the purest Primitive times, has filled the hearts of the more considering persons with great sadness : Could we view our faces in that Glass, we should either correct our deformities by it, or, as some are too ready to do, break the Glass, that it may not at once shew us, and upbraid us with them.

For whether it be that airy Speculations have eaten out the practice, or fiery contentions about matters of lower concerns, have starved the Spirit of Zeal for the great and weighty things of Religion ; or the deluge of prophaneness which threatens to lay morality and godliness under water, be too strong for us to stem the Current ; most certain it is, that the Christian Religion has had its beauty so miserably effaced, has been so wretchedly misrepresented, or so little represented to its advantage, that its open enemies have dared to triumph over it ; and its few cordial friends have found much difficulty and discouragement to support its credit.

Amongst the many Instances of the decay of Religion in this
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present Age, the great Neglect of praying to, and praising God for our Governors supreme and subordinate, has been one, which perhaps has render'd them less zealous for, and possibly jealous of Christianity, as that which has not very favourable aspects upon the Persons and Thrones of Princes; or at least the Professors of it have horribly contradicted their own avowed Principles; and that which they pretend to be the only Rule of their Faith, has but a slender influence upon their Consciences.

Now as I have a clear Warrant from the Text, and as found an Invitation from the gracious Providence of God that smiles upon us, I will endeavour first to shew what it is we owe, and then to awaken the sleepy Consciences of men to pay what they owe, both in Prayer and Praise to God for Kings, and all that are in Authority.

The Text therefore gives us clear Direction in three momentous points. 1. The *Matter* of our Duty; or what we owe. 2. The *Objects* of the duty, or to whom we owe it. 3. The *Reasons* of our duty, why we owe it. (1.) If we heedfully attend to the *first* of these; or *what we owe*: The Text has reduced them to these four particulars.

1. That we offer up to God *supplications, δαίσεις*: earnestly to wrestle with the Almighty, that he would divert his anger, or whatever calamities, judgments, plagues, may be in the womb of that anger, from them: that his vigilant eye would discover, his powerful hand turn away and defeat all those machinations which may be formed against their persons and governments; in a word, that he would secure them against those evils to which their high station, and the discharge of their weighty duties therein, may expose them.

2. That we also present our *prayers, προσευχάς*, to God on their behalf; that he would fill them with all those graces, wisdom, counsel, understanding, courage, that may qualify them for their arduous calling: that he would prosper and crown them with glorious success in all their lawful and honourable undertakings.

3. That further we make *intercessions, ἐνταύτας*, for them, that God would not only bless them, but make them blessings to their Subjects, and happy instruments to procure much good to all that come within the sphere of their power and calling.

4. We owe this further, that we return *thanks, εὐχαριστίας*, to God for them: for all the good that they have done, or that was in their hearts to do; for all those deliverances God has wrought

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out for us by them ; and for all that courage and conduct which God has bestow'd on them to render them serviceable ; and for all that God has done for them in their preservation.

All this we owe ; and are further instructed how we must pay it from the word *παιδεύει* : which will instruct us, 1. that we perform all this with the greatest vigour of Soul, and application of Conscience. 2. That we do it constantly with unwearied perseverance. The *nature* of the word implies the former, and the *form* of the word the latter.

(2.) The *Object* of our duty, is express'd in these words, *for all men ; for Kings, and all that are in authority* : only be it observed, that tho we owe to our King prayer and praise, yet these duties, these debts must be paid to God ; and we shall acquit our selves both as Christians and good Subjects, when what we owe for them, we do not pay it to them, but to God on their behalf.

The persons to whom we owe supplication, prayer, intercession and thanksgiving, are here either described in general or in special. 1. In *general*, we owe it to All men : *ὅτι πάντων ἀνθρώπων* : none so low but our prayers may help them ; none so high but our prayers may serve them ; none so good but may need, none so bad but may claim a share in our prayers.

We are indeed taught to distinguish between the violent men of the world, as they are our *enemies*, and as they are the enemies of the Lord, and of his Christ ; under the former consideration, let us pray that God would forgive them, convert them, restrain them ; wherein if our charitable prayers reach not their hearts, they will return into our own bosoms : And for this we have precept from, and precedent in our Lord and Saviour, *Precept. Mat. 5. 44. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Precedent. Luke 23. 34. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

But as they fall under the other dismal character, our prayers ought to be of another temper, that God would convert 'em, there we would begin ; but if they proceed as implacable enemies of Christ, we pray that he would defeat their counsels, insatuate them in all their contrivances, break their powers, disappoint them in all their expectations ; and seeing we pray for no more than we know Christ will do, that he would overthrow and confound them and all their mischievous devices.

But the Text enjoyns us not only to pray, but to give thanks for
all !

all men ; which seems very hard to flesh and blood : We are apt to think we behave our selves well towards *all men*, if we can bear their insolences, forbear revenge, and rest content under their provocations, and think it to be a straining of the point too far to press us to *give thanks* for them : But indeed in some cases we owe more to our enemies than to our friends, the one will conceal, the other divulge our failings ; and seeing our hearts are so deceitful, and our friends so partial, let's give thanks to God that we have enemies that will watch against, and learn from thence to watch over our selves.

We are debtors to the poor and to the rich ; the poorest may lend us the subsidy of their prayers, of their holy examples ; they may teach us meekness under hard treatments of men, patience under the hand of God ; submission to poverty ; improvement of trials and afflictions ; which are mercies of so great value, that we cannot expect any obligations equivalent from the richest.

2. But especially we owe our *supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings, for Kings and all that are in authority under them.*

If *self* were rightly understood, this duty would be the easiest task that ever was imposed upon us ; for in praying for them, we pray for the Nation, and so for our selves : the prosperity and success of the King, is the prosperity of the whole Kingdom ; and as the Philosopher curst the man, whoever he was, that first divided *bonum, utile & honestum* ; that which is *profitable*, from that which is *just and righteous* : So may they be lookt upon as the common Plagues of a Nation, who first divided the interest of the Prince from that of his People ; or first taught the People to set up an interest distinct and separate from that of their Prince.

(3.) The Reasons which support so weighty a duty are next to be attended to ; and they are two. The first is drawn from our clear *duty*, the second from our unquestionable *interest* ; and consider the cause we have to acknowledge the goodness of God, who has so strongly united both these, that we can never fail in the former, but we must be false to the latter.

1. The former Reason is drawn from the conscience of the divine Command given forth by his Apostle, *I exhort* ; under the authority of which Præcept the highest spirit must bow, the stubbornest bend : This answers all objections, silences all disputes, satisfies all scruples. This Text is not *constitutive* of a new duty, but *declarative* of an old obligation which from the beginning lay upon the Conscience ; this was not a duty now newly created, but newly

newly exemplified ; he does not now make a new bond, but ties it closer that Conscience may feel its bonds ; when Conscience slumbers it must be awakened ; and when a Notion is much worn off, it must be refreshed and toucht up again to the Original.

2. The other Reason is drawn from our own interest and advantage, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* Which Reason has two branches.

1. Our *civil interest* will lie much in't ; *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.* 'Tis but a languishing dying comfort we can take in any thing we call ours, if we cannot possess it in Peace : *Security* is the sweetness of *Propriety* ; whatever be the furniture of our table, the sawce of every morsel is peace and quietness. We look upon all our good things with a pitiful eye, when we think they may be ours but for this moment. The Sword of a foreign Enemy, the Rapine of some petty Tyrant may sweep away what we have in an hour.

2. Our *Religious interest* is greatly concern'd in this duty, *that we may lead a life in all godliness and honesty.* Reason then we have to pray, and give thanks for our Rulers, that we may, and do lead such a life, in outward peace, with a freedom to worship our God according to his will reveal'd to us in his holy word.

From the words thus open'd, many observations offer themselves : I must content my self, and I hope you, with this one clear from the Text, and pertinent to the present occasion.

Doctrine. A religious and Loyal People can never want just cause to praise, and give thanks to God for their Kings and Governours.

If they be bad, yet we have reason to pray God would mend them, and to praise God too, that they are no worse ; that if they be not such as are eligible, yet that they are such as are tolerable. If they be good and gracious, then the case is plain ; to pray he will confirm them ; and to give thanks that we who have neither merit, nor meetness for so great a favour, yet are blessed with it.

If God shall exalt the Nation, we have cause enough to pray, that he would not cast us down ; if he shall lay us low, to bless his name that we are laid no lower.

If God shall prosper our King with success, we have reason still to fear and pray, that our turning those successes into wantonness, may not provoke God to turn his hand against us ; if he shall humble us with adverse providences, yet will there remain matter of thanksgiving that we are not consumed.

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We can never be so low but the everlasting arms are underneath us ; our enemies are never so high but the Almighty arm of God is above them. Let the storms rise and roar, and rage, our God sits above them. There's matter of praise : if it be a dead calm, still we have reason to pray, that storms may not surprize us.

The Psalmist has drawn the circumference of our rejoicing and our fears with great exactness, *Psalm. 2. 11. Rejoice with trembling.* Never such cause of *rejoicing*, but it suggests matter of trembling ; never such cause of *fears*, but it affords matter for hope, place for faith, and room for thanksgiving to God, that we are not sunk in utter despair.

The Apostle, *1 Cor. 7. 30.* teaches us the due measure of sorrow, *To weep as thome wept not* ; and the true bounds of rejoicing too, *To rejoice as if we rejoiced not* ; The former, because God can wipe away those tears from our eyes: the latter, because he can allay our most profuse rejoicing, and mingle our cup of consolation with the waters of bitter affliction ; when God exalts us, we are cautioned not to exalt our selves, but our God ; when he abases us he would have us keep our hearts low, but to lift the eye of our faith on high. And this will be the true mean under the various dispensations of providence, when God humbles us to be humbled, when he chastises us to be chastised, but not sink in dependency ; when he lifts us up, then to be lifted in praises.

The Apostle *James, ch. 5. 15.* instructs us, that *Prayer* is the proper duty for a day of affliction ; that praise is the suitable duty for prosperity ; but yet so, that prayer is never out of season in our highest, nor praise improper in our lowest condition.

In the managing this observation, I will endeavour 1. Briefly to confirm it. 2. Then largely to apply it.

I. For Confirmation.

And for that I shall only offer three considerations.

1. Reason. The wise God has put all things in this lower world in a state of mixture ; none so evil, but has a mixture of good to allay the evil ; none so good, but has a mixture of evil to dilute the goodness of it. God oftentimes writes bitter things against a person, against a people, but withal sends some Mercy to sweeten it ; at other times he indulges us pleasant morsels, but withal provides a mixture of crosses, that we may not surfeit upon the luscious Mercies.

And as the good is distinguish'd from the evil, tho not separated ; so the evil is mingled with the good, but not confus'd ; good is good

good still, tho it receives a tincture of evil ; and evil is evil still, tho it receives a dash of goodness. Now as mercy and judgment, sorrow and joy, are as it were blended together into one mass, so will our praises and prayers have their proper employments in both. If God sets the good against the evil, *Eccles. 7. 14.* there's matter for prayer that God would turn the evil unto good, *Gen. 50. 20.* and matter for praise too, that God has promised it shall work for good, *Rom. 8. 28.* And first let us for the clearing of this point look back into former ages, especially into the Jewish state.

2 Chron. 15. 16, 17. we read that *Asa removed his Mother from being Queen, because she had made an Idol in a Grove.* To depose an Idolatress was then it seems one good step towards a happy Reformation ; And *Asa cut down her Idol, and stamp'd it and burnt it, by the brook Kidron.* What rejoicing was there in Judah that the work of Reformation went on so pleasantly ? What cause of thanksgiving to God, that he had inspired the King with such a zeal for the true worship of God against Idolatry ? But yet 16. 17. *The high places were not taken away out of Israel.* There's matter of lamentation, that the work advanc'd no further ; and of prayer too, that God would raise such a spirit as might pluck them down also : *Nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.* The most perfect heart of the most zealous Prince cannot always go through to a perfect Reformation. But do we not read, that this good King *Asa*, ch. 14. v. 5. *Took away out of all the Cities of Judah, the high places and the images.* True ! out of Judah, but not out of Israel ! Where lay the reason of the Difference ? In Judah he had an hereditary right, had better hold on the spirits of the people ; there was a sweet harmony between the King and the People, there he might venture farther in Reformation. In Israel he had but an acquired right by Conquest ; the People were averse to a through Reformation, there he must use caution and prudence : However the Idols were broken down, there's matter of rejoicing and praise ; the high places are not removed, there's matter of sorrow and prayer.

Sometimes the King may be inclin'd to reform, and a restless People may hinder ; there give thanks to God for a well inclined King, and pray that he would cure the Peoples bigotry : Sometimes a King may incline to Idolatry, and the People adhere to the true Religion ; give thanks for a fixed people, and pray for an averse Prince.

Secondly, Let us but look into our own hearts, and there we

shall find too great a mixture; there we shall meet with grace and nature, heaven and earth, flesh and spirit in continual combat, Gal. 5. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* The flesh has its interest, motions, and actings; the spirit opposes it, it cannot do the evil it would: the spirit breathes, moves, works towards God; the flesh opposes it, so that it cannot do the good it would. *The Law of the mind commands the serving, glorifying of God; the Law of the members rebels and wars against it; the law of the members leads to bondage under sin, the law of the mind resists it.* What reason of strong cries and prayers, that we may be *delivered from this body of death*, Rom. 7. 24. What cause of thanksgiving, that Christ *gives us the victory*, that with our minds we serve the law of God, v. 20.

In a word, we are furnisht with matter of thanksgiving that we are on this side Hell, and yet have mighty reasons for prayer too because we are on this side Heaven.

Thirdly, Let's view our case at home, we shall find a mixture there of good and evil, affording us matter of sorrow and joy, and hence of prayer and praise. God has given our King some good success abroad, let us give thanks for that; but our victories are purchased with the lives, the blood of many of our fellow Subjects, there's matter of mourning to cool the joy of our successes; and still for further prayer, that the issue of this bloody war may be a happy, just and honourable peace: We have large matter of thanksgiving, that God by our King has given a check to the Arms of that Monarch who had swallow'd up so many Countries, and threatned the rest; but still cause of fervent prayer, that God would yet use his Majesty as an instrument, in the hand of his wife and gracious Counsels, to reduce *the man of the earth* to reason, that he may no more triumph.

Again, we have abundant reason to give thanks for our King, that under his auspicious Reign we may be as holy as we will; yet have we reasons for further prayer, that men may not be as wicked as they will, and as their own naughty hearts, and the Tempter would prompt them to be.

Such then being the posture of all humane affairs, there is a dark and bright side of the same cloud; they are chequer'd with black and white throughout, that as they administer matter of joy and sorrow, trouble and comfort, and nothing is sincere and without mixture, so they bespeak of us both prayer and praise.

In Hell, the wrath of God is poured out without mixture, *Rev. 14. 10.* without mixture either of mercy from God, or hope in them. In Heaven, the love of God is given out without mixture, either of anger in God, or fear in the blessed; but we in this middle state have our hopes and fears, our tears and rejoycings, which call for praise in our most depressed, and prayer in our most exalted condition.

II. *Reason.* Is drawn from the natural and necessary connexion between these two duties, of Prayer and Thanksgiving: they are twins of the same womb, they are born, they breathe, they smile or weep, live or die together.

The renewed nature, the new heart is but one, the actings which proceed from thence are various; the branches are many, they are all one in the root; the streams various, the spring but one: As the Capillary Arteries are innumerable in the extreme parts, yet are all one in the heart; as the lines which reach the circumference are numerous, yet all meet in the center; so are the actings of grace various and multiform, as they are diversified by various objects, as drawn out by different occasions, yet they agree, and are uniform in the habit. Prayer and praise are exerted upon various reasons, but it's the same holy nature which supplies and furnishes out these holy operations.

Phil. 4. 6. In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

The same spirit that enables us to pray, assists us also to praise our God; the answers of Prayer immediately engage the soul to return our humble thanks, that he has heard the voice of our supplications: Those very praises suggest matter of prayer again, that he would graciously pardon the defects of our prayer, and overlook the errors of our praises, and yet still to bless his Name that notwithstanding these failures or excesses, he hath regarded with acceptance both our prayers and praises.

Would we reserve and adjourn all our thanksgivings for heaven? why, here's abundant matter to fill up, and furnish out praises on this side the throne! or do we reserve our Prayers for the extremity of distresses? there's occasion for them in the height of our triumphs.

The state of glory excludes prayers: because the Spirits of just men made perfect are put into the actual possession of whatever they could want, or can possibly desire, without fear of losing it: The state of eternal wrath excludes prayer too, because there's

no hope left in that bottom of despair to kindle a spark of desire to meliorate that evil condition: But our present state admits both hope, and desire, and fear too; now whiles we can hope for promised good, or have reason to fear impending evil, we have proper occasion for prayer; and while we can pray, we have just cause of praise, that God is not out of the reach of our Prayer, nor we out of the reach of his Mercy. Psal. 66. 19, 20. *Verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my supplication. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, (from him) nor his mercy from me.*

Let us once more consult the Apostle; 1 Thes. 5. 16, 17, 18. *Rejoice evermore: Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks. At first view we may imagine the Apostle puts us upon either impossible or impracticable, or contradictory services: Rejoice evermore! As if we had no cause of sorrow, nor any thing further to ask; and yet Pray without ceasing! as if we had no place for, or cause of thanksgiving: Pray, as if you had nothing; and yet Praise, as if you possessed all things: And in every thing give thanks. If the case be good, bless God directly and formally, if evil, yet bless him that it's no worse.*

The attributes of God appear to us, and we conceive of them that they really are various; and accordingly, we engage our souls in a various consideration of them, and a different demeanour of soul towards them. We conceive of him as good, and therefore love him; as faithful and true, and therefore believe him, and in him, trust to him, and depend upon him; as bountiful and rich in mercy towards us, and therefore return our thanks unto him: And yet these attributes are but one in God, or rather they are that one God. Thus the graces which a Believer does act and exercise are distinguished, tho not divided; the soul loves, fears, and believes, and yet 'tis but one soul, one new creature that puts forth these various operations.

If we bring all this to the present subject of which we treat, and the solemn occasion on which we meet, it will stand thus. We are here as a people, and I hope really a people that would recognize the divine favours to our King, to us all in him; yet prayer must not be excluded from the present service: that God would never be weary of doing good to him, or to us in him; that God would finish the work that *he* has begun, and strengthen the King to finish the work which *he* has begun; Thus to bless our God for the ground we get; and as we gain to pray that we may

may get more, till this troublesome War shall terminate in a happy Peace; that so Peace being settled abroad, we may lead a quiet and peaceable life at home, in all godliness and honesty.

III *Reason.* The Truth may be confirmed from the vicissitudes and alternations of the divine providence; which, as it were, delighting to sport it self with humane affairs, creates those perpetual changes in them, which will employ our praises as well as our prayers.

What we see in the successions of night and day, what we feel of changes in our vile and frail bodies. as to health and sickness, that may we expect in the great political Bodies, and the affairs of Empires.

The Psalmist has made a Record of it, *Psal. 102. 10. Thou hast lifted me up, (there's matter of thanksgiving) and thou hast cast me down. (There's matter of debasement and prayer.)*

That which we are to keep in our eye when God exalts us, is a holy fear, lest we exalting our selves, God should throw us down; and that which we should keep upon our hearts when God abases us, is, that we abasing our selves, God may be intreated to lift us up

A deplorable instance of the impotency of humane nature, to bear any thing with a *due temper* and moderation, is that of *Uzziah*, 2 Chron. 26. 15. *He was marvellously helped until he was strong: But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.* So difficult it is to maintain the equipoise, and not to reel and stagger from one extreme to another: A little air swells a bubble, and a little more breaks it.

And this *David* found, *Psal. 30. 6. In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved, thou Lord by thy favour hast made my mountain to stand strong.* Wherein we may observe, 1. His confidence, that his mountain should never be moved, or however not removed. 2. That this confidence seems to be well founded, upon the favour of God, wherein then lay the evil of his confidence? That he did not duly consider the instability of all things, but presumed that his state was unmovable. 3. That God, to humble his confidence, hides his face, and then his confidence is shaken.

But thus do the affairs of Kingdoms and Commonwealths run in a circle; prosperity awakens pride, pride provokes God to forsake us, and a people forsaken are upon the brink of destruction: *Let therefore him that stands take heed lest he fall; and let him that falls, repent and pray that God would raise him up.*

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It was a deep sense of the perpetual rotations of Providence that moved that great *Saxon* King, whenever God smiled upon his Arms with Victory, to prepare for adverse events; and whenever he lost the day, to encourage and strengthen himself with the hopes of better success.

Si modo victor erat, ad crastina bella timebat :

Si modo victus erat, ad crastina bella parabat.

All this leads to our Duty : God has favour'd us with good success this Campaign, praise his Name, but presume not; he can send us a rebuke in a moment : If so, be not dejected, but pray, for he has in infinite wisdom attemper'd all affairs, that prayer and praise shall have their turns, as prosperity and adversity walk their rounds; till prayer be swallowed up of eternal praises to them that fear the Lord, and the presumptuous hopes of impenitent sinners be drowned in eternal despair.

Having now briefly confirm'd the truth as was promised, I must more largely improve it, in

II. *The Application.*

We have heard, that a Religious People can never want just reasons to pray to, and praise God for Kings and all that are in Authority. Harken then to the Apostles *Exhortation* : He exhorts, and 'tis in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ that he does so; he exhorts, that this be done *first of all*, that it may have a precedency of all our little private interests; and that we postpone not so important a duty to the adjusting of lesser matters.

Would we give our selves leave and leisure to think, what a sad generation of Emperors they were, for whom the Apostle enjoyns the Primitive Christians to pray and give thanks; it would shame our consciences and make us blush, that they could pray better, and praise God more, for a *Tiberius*, a *Claudius*, a *Caligula*, a *Nero*, than we for a Prince so tender of his Subjects, so far from the sanguinary spirit of persecution, which filled all the veins, and the whole mass of blood of those Plagues of the World, those Monsters of Men, the *Roman* Emperors; such, as 'tis a wonder the earth could bear, or the patience of God endure such Wretches to tyrannize over so vast numbers of rational creatures, as the Empire did contain : I can look upon them under no other notion, than the Ministers of divine wrath to plague a generation of men, who had not only shut, but put out their eyes, that neither natural nor
gospel

gospel light might shine into them ; for such as these, better men had been much too good ; and much worse, if possible, not too bad to avenge the affronted Deity upon their Immoralities. But yet as to the Christians, who were converted out of them, and dwelt among them, and were a part of them, they were not so bad, but faith could pick up something for which to bless God ; and the worse they were, the more need still to ply the throne with humble prayer either to make them better, or to keep them from being worse.

I would be understood to speak this of those that were Heathens. For if any in after times should be found professing the Christian Religion, and wearing the Heathen, or perhaps the Atheist under that disguise ; if when a flattering juncture should tempt him, he should throw off the vizard, and appear an Apostate, a *perfidius*, the greatest indication of the unpardonable sin ; the Apostle would not, durst not say, that they should pray for such a one, 1 Joh. 5. 16.

And we have good assurance, that a *Nazianzene* would not pray for a *Julian*, unless it were to confound him.

Tertullian, who liv'd under a set of Emperors of a fairer character, has given us a Glass in which we may see the true face, and natural complexion of the Christian Religion in his days, as to their behaviour towards their Emperors.

Illuc suspicientes Christiani, manibus expansis, quia innocui ; nudato capite, quia non erubescimus ; sine Monitore, quia de pectore ; Oramus pro omnibus Imperatoribus, Vitam illis prolixam, Imperium securum, Domum tutam, Exercitus fortes, Senatum fidelem, Populum probum, Orbem quietum. & quaecumq; hominis & Caesaris vota sunt.

We *Christians* (says he) lifting up our eyes to Heaven, with our hands stretcht out, to shew that we are innocent ; with our heads uncovered, to shew we are not ashamed ; and without a Monitor because we pray from our very heart, do beseech God for all Emperors, that he would grant them a long life, a secure government, a safe house, valiant armies, a faithful Senate, a reformed people, a quiet world, and whatever else either as men, or Emperors they can pray for themselves.

Compare now the matter of right, whom the Apostle commands the Primitive Christians to pray for ; and the matter of fact, whom the Primitive Christians did pray for, and we shall be convinced, that the best will need our Prayers, and the worst may challenge our Thanksgivings to God, that he has kept his

poor

poor Church alive, and in being under them. As the skill of the Pilot is more magnified, that he steers the Vessel steady in a storm, so is the power, wisdom, and faithfulness of Christ more glorious, that he could secure his Church under such barbarous Tyrants.

How utterly inexcusable then are we, who being posited under more favourable circumstances, instead of praising God for gracious Princes, are murmuring at them upon any little trip, or wry step that they make or take, and perhaps are first creating causes to murmur at, and then justifying our murmurings by those imaginary causes; who instead of praising God for them, are cursing them, and that not in the Bed-chamber, but the open streets; being uneasie under their Scepters, and rendring them uneasy upon the Throne; and instead of strengthening their hands against the common enemy, are weakening them, either to oppose their Enemies, or protect their Loyal Subjects.

I would willingly hope, that there are not many of this bran and leaven amongst us, considerable either for numbers, for power, or interest; especially since such vast throngs of them have of late been converted; converted I say, to their own secular interest, perhaps to the Kings; tho whether really converted to God, their own inconsistent conversations give us some cause to doubt. I speak of those Secular and State-converts, of whom his Maesties Victories in *Ireland* converted thousands, his late Successes in *Flanders* ten thousands; and *Non-jurors* are converted to *Jurors*; tho happier it had been for them, if of Swearers, they had been Non-swearers, and learned to fear an Oath. Our mischief then is, that all these State Profelytes upon the least temptation will become Apostates.

That which will employ the remainder of my time must be to enquire

1. What matter of prayer Providence has afforded us to offer up to God for the King, and all that are in Authority?
2. What reasons we have to return thanks to God for our King, and those that are in Authority?
3. What ought to be the frame and temper of our hearts, while we are praising God for them.

In all which I will endeavour to evidence, that when we are most humble in our Prayers, yet still we may find cause of Thanksgiving; and when we are raised and enlarged in our Praises, yet we shall not want cause to lie low at the footstool, and look up

to the throne in most earnest supplications upon their account.

Let us then narrowly enquire what matter of Prayer Providence has afforded us, to offer up for our King, and all that are in Authority.

§ 1. The first thing that recommends itself to us, is, that God will, yet more abundantly, pour upon our King the spirit of government, that he may so govern the people, whom God, and their own choice, have committed to his charge; that he may give his account with joy. *2 Chron. 1. 7.* God gave Solomon his Option, *Ask what I shall give thee!* A large Chutter! And the same God that gave him his choice, gave him wisdom to chuse, Thus he answers, *v. 10. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people which is so great?* In which choice he discovered, that he was already possessed of much of that wisdom that he askt of God: For 1. It was a wise consideration, that he lookt upon the people to be the Lords people; more the Lords than his. He durst not therefore arrogate any such propriety in them, or such dominion over them, as might prejudice Gods title to them, or disseize God of his Sovereignty over them. *It is thy People.* 2. It was a wise thought, that a great people are better governed by wisdom and prudence than force: A principle, which could he have infused into the thick skull of *Rehoboam*, he had saved him the ten Tribes, which his own rash folly rent from him. 3. He was wise, that he understood that it must be the wisdom that comes from above, that is pure, and of an ætherial temper, like the fire that came down upon the Altar, that would prove the true wisdom to rule Gods people: when all conclusions have been tried, all experiments made, yet it will be found that Piety is the best Policy.

Now this Prayer of Solomon was so acceptable to God, that he gives him both that he asked, and that he asked not, *v. 11. Because this was in thy heart; and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the lives of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life, but hast asked knowledge for thy self, that thou mayest judge my people over whom I have made thee King; wisdom and knowledge is granted thee, and I will give thee riches, wealth, and honour, &c.*

1. Let us therefore earnestly pray, that God would grant to our King, and in their proportion to all his Ministers, a large measure of the *Fear of the Lord*, that it may be the foundation of all his Counsels, all his Administrations, all his Undertakings.

David and Solomon both agreed in this maxim, Psal. 111. 10. Prov. 9. 10. That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: And tho David in some few instances had departed from his own avowed Rule, yet when he came to die, and look death in the face, and to satisfy his Conscience for the errors of his reign, he freely abides by this truth 2 Sam. 23. 3. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me: he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And our Lord Jesus Christ himself, to whom all power was given in heaven and earth, Mat. 28. under whose feet the father hath put all things: and given him to be head over all things to the Church. Yet was he to be qualified for the executing of that great trust, with the spirit of wisdom, and with a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, Isa. 11. 2, 3.

And not only is this qualification necessary for our King, but for all that are in Authority: This was the reason of that excellent advice given by Jethro to Moses, Exod. 18. 21. *Provide out of all the people able men; such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.*

2. Let us further pray that God would endue our King and his Ministers, with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, that they may not judge by the sight of their eyes, nor reprove by the hearing of the ears: which, as it was promis'd and given to our blessed Saviour, Isa. 11. 2. and that without measure, Joh. 3. 34. So has he the residue of the Spirit to dispence to all those whom he has placed in publick stations, that they may answer the ends of government: Then may we prognosticate and promise to our selves happy days, and our selves to be a happy people; when all that are in Authority, shall not hearken to the insinuations of Sycophants, nor lend an ear to false Accusers, nor listen to the whispers of offered Bribes to pervert judgment, and to blind their eyes, but shall administer impartial justice; consider the cause, and not respect persons; when Justice shall run down like a stream, and Righteousness like a mighty flood; when the oppressed shall be relieved, the Orphan and the fatherless vindicated.

Nor do we want matter of Thanksgiving upon this account; when we seriously consider how the Courts of Judicature are filled with persons of great Learning and Knowledge in the Laws of the Land, and above all with men of great Integrity in the administration; such as fear not the faces of the mighty, such as no Bribes can corrupt; and when we have seen of late a notable example

ample made of one, that without any temptation, but of his covetous heart, dared to receive a Bribe, under the colour of a Gratiuity, to betray his trust, and pervert justice and judgment in the Fountain.

§ 2. It will be proper matter for our Prayers too, that God would single out and bestow upon our King, wise and faithful Counsellors, such as stood before *Solomon*; not the green heads, and unexperienced rash young men, that soothed up *Rehoboam* to his own ruine.

And as we have matter for Prayer, so for Thanksgiving too, that God has blessed the King with wise Senators, who considering the present necessities under which his Majesty now is, have supported him with great indeed, but absolutely necessary Supplies: They judged in their great wisdoms, that it was better to breathe a vein, than to cut off the head; to prune the tree, and lop off some useful branches, than to have it cut up by the roots: That it's better we should complain once than always. It was wisely considered, that it was more eligible at any rates to keep the War at a distance in foreign parts, than by unseasonable sparing to invite it to our own doors, nay into our own bowels. The little finger of a foreign Enemy invading, had been heavier than the loyns of our Representatives.

And let us heartily and chearfully praise our God, that our cost has not been in vain; nor let us ever grudge, that something of the lading is thrown over-board to save the Vessel, in which all our most precious concerns civil and religious are embarked.

§ 3. Let us again send up our most earnest supplications, that God would preserve the life of his Majesty: It was indeed somewhat a rude Remonstrance that the Army made to *David*, 2 Sam. 18. 3. *Thou shalt not go forth to battle*; and yet there was love at the bottom, loyalty and fidelity in the rudeness, and the reason of it. *Thou art worth ten thousand of us*. It seems, *David* preferred loyal rudeness to frowning treachery. The Life of our King is an invaluable mercy; but yet if after the Petitions of Lords and Commons, and the many from all parts of three Kingdoms, humbly beseeching him to take care of his royal person, the King has seen cause, by an unparalleled example of courage, to inspire his Army with an extraordinary spirit of valour: what reason have we to beseege Heaven, to wrestle with the Almighty for the preservation of the life so generously exposed abroad for

our security at home ; when *Joshua* was engaged against *Amalek* in the field, *Moses* with *Aaron* and *Hur* were striving with God in the Mount ; well knowing the ready way to prevail over the enemy in battle, is first to prevail with God in prayer.

Let us therefore repeat our prayers ; *That God would compass him with his favour as with a shield*, *Psal. 5. 12.* *That God would bind up his soul in the bundle of life with the Lord his God, but the souls of his enemies he would sling out, as from the middle of a sling*, *1 Sam. 25. 29.*

And in this particular how mercifully has God prevented our prayers ? *Before we called God has answered us ; and while we were yet speaking God did hear*, *Isa. 65. 24.*

Let us therefore convert this great mercy into Thanksgiving, and that Thanksgiving into Prayer, that both may run in a perpetual circle which knows no beginning, and knows no end.

§ 4. We have great cause to pray, that God would bless our King with a loyal, quiet people, disposed to obedience. The same power that *Still the noise of the Sea, must also still the tumult of the People*, *Psal. 85. 7.* And the Psalmist, who understood this secret of government with an admiring heart, blessed God, *Psal. 144. 1, 2.* not only that he had *taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight*, but that he *subdued his People under him*. The waters would be always smooth, if the unruly winds did not ruffle them into billows : And the multitude love their ease so well, that they would enjoy the sweets of peace with contentment, did not some politrick *Achitophels* ferment the humour, and then influence them to disorders ; first throw in a spark of discontent, and then blow it up into flames of Mutinies and Rebellions. An evidence that government is of God, who composes the minds of so many millions to a calm submission and willing obedience to one man.

Let it be here remembred, that God has given our King a people, who tho they may sometimes be practised upon to run into uproars, yet Loyalty is so inlaid in their tempers, and annealed to their souls, that the secret enemies of our King and Peace could never yet make their earnings out of them : They are like the West Wind, that for a while may be troublesome, but commonly goes to bed at night ; mutable indeed like the Moon, yet as they know the time of rising, yet they know their going down. Those commotions, which in some popular States would overturn, have amongst us hardly shaken the Government ; and
what

what has been elsewhere an Earthquake, we have scarcely felt so much as a Trembling.

Nay, we have great cause to joyn our Thanksgiving with our Prayer, that he has converted our danger into our security ; that he has made the people not the terror of the government, but of its enemies : And what was once the preservation of *Christ*, is now of the King ; some ill men have an ill and envious eye upon the Throne, but *they fear the people*.

§ 5. Let us continue our Prayers, that the Reign of his Majesty may not be famous to after ages by any notable judgment ; that no devouring fires, desolating pestilence, bloody massacres, ruining earthquakes, or inundation, may signalize his government to posterity.

It was a Speech becoming the Monster *Caligula*, who heavily complained of the unhappiness of his Reign, that it was not marked with any notable calamities ; as if a greater Plague could have befallen the Empire than himself.

We have had some of our late Reigns that have fallen under another character ; the Massacre in *Ireland*, the Civil Wars in *England*, the dreadful Fire of *London*, and the horrid Plague that ushered it, will secure them against an inglorious Record in our Chronicles for ever.

But let us bless that merciful Providence, that has hitherto preserved the present government from being known in History by such tokens of divine wrath and vengeance ; and again pray, that a firm peace, sanctified plenty, prosperous trade, and universal prosperity, may be the glory of it ; and that the black brand of universal debauchery, which stigmatized the former age, may be worn out in this, by a blessed Reformation.

§ 6. Let us associate our Prayers, that the God of Peace, who makes men to be of one mind in one house, would continue, and encrease that good understanding that has hitherto been between the King and his People ; and let not evil men be able to foment jealousies between them, to weaken our hands at home, that our enemies may have the easier work to destroy us abroad :

There are a sort of wretched tools, that are always whispering in the ears of Princes, that the Peoples Privileges and Franchises will undermine and blow up the Royal Prerogative ; and then fly-blowing the Peoples Heads, that Prerogative will eat up the Peoples Liberties and Properties. Now this being a tender point,

point, wherein each is infinitely jealous, produces a continual parrying, and fencing, and counterworking between them: for where the Sea is eating and working into the shore, the maritime People will be raising Mounds and Piles not only to secure themselves that they lose no more, but by way of Reprisal, encroaching upon the Main for what they have lost.

But let all that wish well to the King and his People pray, and add all just endeavours to their Prayers, that no perverse spirit may mix it self with their respective interests, no jealousies creep into their counsels, but that they may mutually conspire for the publick welfare.

I have read of the meeting of two poor men, the one blind, the other lame; the *blind* man had good *limbs*, the *lame* had good *eyes*. It was mutually agreed that the blind man should carry the lame upon his shoulders; and thus the lame man was eyes to the blind, the blind was limbs to the lame. I'll venture to apply it: The people have strength, but they want conduct; our governours have conduct, but they want the peoples strength: Be it agreed, that we lend the King all our power, and that he govern us with his wisdom and skill.

Acceptis oculis, præbuit Ille pedes.

Surely we have great reason to bless our God upon this head; that God has graciously preserved a mutual confidence between the King and his people; that they who have sought occasions for our disturbance upon this subject, have found none; that wicked men have been unsuccessful in their insinuations; that the tares they have sown have yielded 'em no harvest.

§ 7. Let us yet pray and not faint, and pour out our souls in supplications to the Almighty, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Battel, that his Majesties forces by Sea and Land may be crowned with glorious success; that he may at length reduce to Reason that mighty *Nimrod*, who has taught us what we may expect from his prevailing Arms, by the treatment he has given to his own too Loyal Subjects. That Monarch is of the nature of fluid bodies; *quæ difficulter suis, facile alienis terminis continentur*: If then his own temper will not restrain him, let God send out a powerful hand that can.

Let us therefore pray, that the end of this bloody and expensive War may be an honourable and just Peace; in which the Interest of the Allies may be secured, the Interest of our own Nation in Trade recovered, the Dominion of the Seas vindicated: but God deliver us from a Peace patcht up of plausible expedients; palliated with fair pretences, to cover the enemies secret purposes to violate it, when he has filled his empty Coffers; when he has recruited his exhausted strength by taking breath, to build his Alliances upon the ruines of the dissolved Confederacy; which like an old Ulcer ill healed, and skin'd over, waits only a flattering juncture to break out again, with more threatening symptoms; But let our Prayer and Peace be that of *Hezekiah*, *Ila. 39. 8. Good is the word of the Lord, for he said, there shall be peace and truth in my days.* Nor do we want matter of thanksgiving for the successful and hopeful issue of this Summers Campaign: Wherein the late boasted invincible Prince is proved to be conquerable; and as we hope, so we pray, that this may be but an earnest of what God will further do for a Repenting, Reforming, Praying and Thankful People.

§ 8. Lastly, Let us keep up our Prayers in vigor, that God will make our King a glorious instrument in the hand of his gracious power to suppress that daring wickedness, that impudent profaneness, which the Enemy sowed, water'd, and gave increase to, in the late Reigns of unhappy memory: That, at least, iniquity may stop its mouth, and hide its deformed face, that deeds of darkness may not defie the Sun; that if men will sin, they may however creep into those corners, whither they had once driven much of Religion.

We must confess and lament that we have sins enow in the Armies to rout them without an Enemy; Sins enow in the Fleets to sink them without a Tempest, and sins enow on shoar to make us like to *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; but the more need we have to beseech heaven that he would not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities: And that he would put upon our King the Honour of the famous *Hercules*, who cleansed the *Augean* Stables, with turning the stream of the River through it; a labour justly numbred amongst the twelve.

We look upon his Majesty as bearing a double Sword, that of *War*, and that of *Justice*; we pray that he may bear neither in vain:

vain: We have seen how wisely and strongly he has wielded the former; we now pray for a Peace, that he may have a Theatre whereon to wield the other: And when God shall command him to sheath that of War, he will invite him to draw the other: To defend the innocent, to plead the cause of the Orphan and Widow; and to punish those wretches whose effrontery has dared both the Sword of God and the King.

We are ready to wonder what temptations these vile ones can pretend to their abominations: The cheap swearer sells his soul for nothing: The blasphemer makes bold to defile the sacred name of God with his unhallowed lips; and what wrong has his Creator done him? The profuse drunkard sells his health for a pleasure that perishes in the using.

And here we would gladly find more matter of thanksgiving, for what our King, and those in authority under him, have done to vindicate the name of God against these Aggressors: We thankfully own that some Remedies have been prescribed and applied, but slight medicines do but irritate the disease: some good Laws we have, and some Proclamations for their execution, against the Profanation of the Lords day, against Cursing and Swearing; but seeing execution is the life of the Law, without which the Law is but a dead Letter; and that there are so few men of Courage, zealous for the glory of God, and the repute of our holy Religion, to give life to those Laws by an impartial execution; there is work still for earnest Prayer, that God would take the work into his own hand, and effect that by the *Sword of his Mouth*, which the *Mouth of the Sword* cannot, or they that manage it will not.

Forget we not however to return our humble thanks to God, who has stirred up some from the Press and Pulpit to bear their testimony against the Iniquity of the day; and for those zealous Magistrates, especially in the City of *London*, who have dared to punish, where any have dared to offend, and have been zealous for the honour of God, against all the discouragements they have encountered in the way of their Duty.

(2.) Proceed we now to our *Second Inquiry*; *What proper matter for thanksgiving to God we can find on the behalf of the King, and those that are in authority.*

§ 1. And first let us begin our thanks to God, that he has given us such a Prince to govern us : A mercy for which we could neither pretend merit, nor meetness : A Prince that can shew that Title in reality, which some others had only in formality, our own deliberate consent and free choice. I know, Succession in the right line has made a mighty noise amongst us ; but surely rational creatures have their reason allotted them to know, and chuse what's best for themselves, or let them quit their pretended superiority above the brutes. And if there be any such thing, the Election of the People gives the clearest *Jus Divinum*, both to the kind or form of government, and the person that must support and administer it.

Deut. 17. 15. *That shalt in any wise set him over thee whom the Lord thy God shall chuse.* Where we cannot but observe, 1. The act of the People. *Setting a King over them.* And this 2. In pursuance of the act of God, chusing or pointing out the person, whom the People ought to set up.

Now this manifestation of Gods choice, in either is a way extraordinary, and thus he pointed to *David*, as the person whom in due season the People were to set over themselves. For tho God had designed the person, and anointed him by *Samuel*, in token of that Designation, yet the Right of the People was left entire unto them. 2 Sam. 2. 4. *The men of Judah came, and there they anointed David King over the house of Judah.* Which Title as *David* owned, so he asserts, pleads, and adheres to it in his controversy with the house of *Saul*, v. 7. *The house of Judah have anointed me King over them.* And there's no doubt but if a People wanted a King, they would thankfully own the condescension of God, that he would direct them to a fit person whom they might advance to the Throne.

But in ordinary cases, when we cannot expect an immediate Revelation to determine the point, we must look upon the person to be of the divine Designation, whom all circumstances considered, God has qualified for government in general, and adapted to the genius, and temper of the Nation in particular, over whom he is to reign : Now what could be more articulately the voice of God in our case than this : He was a Prince and Protestant born, such a one the Nation groaned for ; train'd up to War from his youth ; such a one we wanted, to revive

the Military Courage of the Nation, almost choaked with luxury and riot, through the effeminacy of the two last reigns; one whose Interest led him to espouse the betrayed Cause and Interest of the Land, against a haughty Prince, who had swallow'd up a considerable part of *Europe*, and daily gap'd to devour the rest: Now it being clear that we wanted a Prince, and as clear that we wanted such a Prince, and still as clear that God offered us such a one as we wanted, what could the Nation do in their general Convention, but set up such a one as the Lord did choose.

Let us therefore return our thanks to our God, who graciously offered; who disposed the hearts of the people unanimously to accept the offer of God, and then so powerfully inclined the Princes heart to accept our offer; tho he foresaw the Crown of *England* was alternately flowred with Lillies and Crosses; and he that would wear our Crown of Gold, must also wear one of Thorns.

But as we have cause of Praise, so have we of Prayer too. In the grand Charter of *Israel* to set a King over them, there are some special clauses to which both King and People will do well to attend.

1. That the person whom they should set over them, be one of their Brethren, v. 15. *Thou mayst not set a stranger over thee.* To this Proviso our Convention had a religious respect; judging him that is of a *strange Religion*, that has espoused a *foreign interest*, and whose heart is an Alien to the good and prosperity of the People, and who had introduced a *foreign power*, to be really a stranger, tho locally born within the Kingdom; and him that shall own the Cause of our Religion, the true Interest of the People, to be a Denizon, tho he had been born in the remotest parts of the earth.

2. We have here a Law prescribed to the King himself, v. 18. *That when he sits upon the throne of the kingdom, he shall write him a Copy of this Law in a Book; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God; to keep all the words of this Law — that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.* He must still remember, that as the people have lifted him up above them, yet he is under God still.

*Regum timendorum in proprios Gregeſ,
Reges in ipſos Imperium eſt Jovis.*

This Law of the Lord in which the King is commanded to read, and walk, affords us a Diſtinction which ſome men tinctured with an arbitrary ſpirit, either will not underſtand, or would conſound. 1. There is *the Law of all Kings.* 2. *The way of ſome Kings.*

1. There is *the Law of all Kings*; or that Law which the King of Kings has preſcribed ſubordinate Kings to govern themſelves, and their people by: That they truſt in God, and not to an arm of fleſh; that they make the Word of God their Rule; that their hearts be not lifted up above their brethren. And unto this divine Law we pray that our King, that all Kings, and all that are in Authority may give deference.

2. *There is the way of ſome Kings*; not that in which they ought to walk, but which ſome of them, too many, are perſuaded to tread, 1 Sim. 8. 11. *This will be the manner of your King, &c.* Not what righteouſly he ought to be, but what eventually may be.

Bleſſed therefore be our God, that we have *known Laws*, that we know what we may expect from our King; that he knows what he may expect from us, that there may be a mutual confidence between us; that the King break not in upon our Properties, that we break not in upon his Regalities; that the Laws of the Land are to determine and arbitrate all matters between us; that the King may rule, and we obey, in the Fear of the Lord; and God, *even our God, ſhall give us his bleſſing.*

§ 2. Let our moſt enlarged Praises be offered unto God on the Kings behalf, that in the midit of thoſe many dangers to which he has been expoſed, yet the Divine Providence has warcht over his perſon. Bullets are impartial things; *the Sword deſtines one as well as another*; the Cannon is no Reſpecter of perſons: and yet, when many have fallen on his right hand, many on the left, the fatal ſtroke has not come nigh him.

We cannot forget what a wound God gave us this laſt year, in the perſon of our moſt excellent, moſt gracious Queen: none can touch that tender point but our wounds bleed afreſh. Tears

may be wiped from our eyes, but the Fountain flows grief to this day; we cannot reflect upon that dreadful stroke which astonish'd three Kingdoms, but our hearts tremble at the thought, that if the blow had been repeated in the person of his Majesty, and our wound opened before it was well healed, we must have bled to death,

Bless we God therefore, that Providence in preserving our King, has not preserved only three Kingdoms, but almost all *Europe*. And let us mingle our Prayers with our Thanksgivings, that the same watchful and faithful eye of Providence would superintend his person still, that Praises may succeed Prayers, and Prayers follow Praises in an uninterrupted succession, which that the one may be successful, and the other acceptable, let us be advised that we mix not our sins with either.

§ 3. We have special matter of Thanksgiving administred to us, that God has attended the Arms of the Confederates with unexpected, sure with undeserved successes, this Summer. This is the duty of the Text, and of the Day; which we have the more reason to admire, and recognize, in that the word and works of God have had such lean success upon our hearts, and lives at home: we may well wonder that the Kings Sword should cut so deep in the field, when the Sword of God does so little execution upon our lusts; would we be persuaded to lay down our Arms and submit to God, how soon would our enemies weapons drop out of their hands, and they be found prostrate at our feet.

Upon what confidence is it, that we who so desperately fight against God, should hope to prevail over our enemies. Are we so vain as to think our selves fit matches for Heaven and Earth? It had been our wisdom, when grappling with so potent an enemy, to have made our Peace with the Almighty! *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy, are we stronger than he?* Let us therefore before we enter upon further acts of hostility, hearken to the Advice of our Saviour, *Luk. 14. 31.* to deliberate and consult, *whether we are able with our ten thousands of sins, to meet him, who can meet us with twenty thousands of judgments;* and if not, to send Embassadors of Peace, or rather to close with those overtures, which he by his own Embassadors of Peace has offered unto us.

But

But let us join our Supplications to our Thanksgivings, that the grace of God may turn us from our iniquities, that God may turn from his just displeasure, and that we repenting of the evil of sin, he may also of the evil of punishment, which he hath threatned, and we have deserved.

§ 4. We have yet plenteous matter to fill up and furnish our Thanksgivings, that we could sit at home, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, eating the good of the Land, when our Lord the King, with his Nobles and Commanders were in Tents. I am afraid, we have not duly weighed the Mercy, that our Native Country has not been made the seat of War, which tho it has been supported with the Nations Pulse, yet not at the cost of our Blood. God and the King have kept the War from our doors. The cruel enemy does not Lord it in our houses. We live out of the noise of the Cannon, the sound of the Trumpet, the groans of the Dying. Our Cities are not first plundered, and then fired. The enemy has not reaped what we sowed. Our Virgins are not torn from under the Wings of their tender Parents; our Wives from the Arms of their beloved Husbands. How little impression has this made upon our hearts, if a Mercy of so great importance escapes our most serious Consideration, our highest Thanksgiving.

I have observed, when the issues of affairs upon the Wheel were dubious, how impatient we were, how fretful that we could no sooner hear the Events of Sieges, Battles; when had we had understood our selves, we had more reason to admire the disposal of wise Providence, that these matters were transacted at such a distance, that we could be informed no sooner. Had this War been acted upon the bloody Theater of our Native Country; our own eyes would have been the Expresses to tell of the burning of Towns, our ears the Intelligencers, that would soon have brought the tidings, that our Country was laid waste and desolate.

And now let fervent Prayers accompany our Praises, that our base ingratitude, our sordid murmurings, may not bring this War over Seas, to avenge the quarrel of provoked goodness upon us; we who have no more sympathized with our Brethren and fellow Subjects, that have hazarded or sacrificed
their

their Lives to keep Fire and Sword at a distance from us; may justly be taught at dearer rate, to prize that Mercy, when God shall hiss for Armies of enemies to invade the Land of our Nativity.

§ 5. Proceed we to yet further cause of Thanksgiving to God, that has made our King his Servant in delivering us from those Twin-plagues of *Papery and Slavery*, and therefore do we offer to him the Twin-duties of *Prayer and Praise*.

May we never imitate the *Israelites* who cried importunately for Mercies one day, which they scornfully threw away the next. We cannot but remember, sure I am God remembers, how we sighed, and groaned under the apprehensions of Papal Tyranny; how we fasted, how we prayed, that God would prevent what we feared, divert what threatned us, and remove what we felt, with prodigal vows what we would be, what we would do, what we would return, if God would deliver, and save us that one time.

As *Israel* was in a wretched frame to praise God for Manna, when they were murmuring, and longing again for the Flesh-pots of *Egypt*; in such a sorry case are we to bless God for our Deliverances, when we are doting upon our old Bondage, and have forgot the evils we were freed from, the ends we were delivered for, and the present freedom we are delivered unto.

Awake therefore, and watch unto Prayer, that our abuse of Mercy may not incense our God, to seize that into his hands which we have forfeited; a Father may justly take away the Childrens Bread, when they trample it under their feet; and remove the Candle, which they abuse to fight and quarrel, or at least to sport and play by. How easily can a provoked God turn the Wheel upon us again; and because we would not serve God in liberty and plenty of all things, constrain us to serve our enemies in bondage, under the want of all things.

§ 6. We have infinite matter of Thanksgiving to God, but I will refresh your Memories with one more. Let our Souls
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and all that it within us bleſs his Name, that under his Majeſties benign and tender government we may be as holy as we will, we may pray in our Families, worſhip our God in our Congregations, reform our own perſons, and none diſturbs us, none makes us afraid. Who hinders our Religious obſervation of the Lords day? Who perſecutes us for acting, walking, worſhipping according to our Conſciences, provided our Conſciences be inſtructed, and guided by the word of God.

The King has broken the rod of the oppreſſor; it lies no longer upon the lot of the righteous, as a preſſing temptation to put forth their hand to iniquity. The fury of the violent man is reſtrained; the prey plucked out of the Teeth of the Lyon; in ſhort, the ſnare is broken, and we are delivered.

But yet we have cauſe to pray, that Men may not be as wicked as they will; that the ſwiniſh Drunkard, the vain Swearer, the impudent Blaſphemer, the Sabbath breaker and filthy Adulterer may be reſtrained and athamed; and that at leaſt it may be as Criminal to be Atheiſtical and Irreligious, as it has ſometimes been repared to ſerve and worſhip God the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

I have now diſpatcht my two firſt enquiries: It remains,

(3.) *That we enquire, What ought to be the frame of our hearts whiſt we are making ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks for Kings and all that are in authority?* For ſatisfaction in this point, I muſt only leave theſe few Directions, and then Conclude.

Direction 1. Conſcienciouſly beware that we pull not down, by proſtating the Lords day, all that we build up by a Thankſgiving day; we have cauſe to fear, leſt we provoke God more than we praiſe him: Praiſe him in words, and diſhonour him in our works. As God expoſtulated with his People when they were Faſting, Iſa. 58. 5. *Is it ſuch a Faſt that I have choſen? May he not plead with us; Is this ſuch a Thankſgiving-day*

day as I have chosen? Let us fear lest God make us keep a day of *Fasting* for our day of *Thanksgiving*: Profaning Gods day is an odd way of praising him. I will readily grant,

1. That *Thanksgiving* is a duty proper to the Lords day. Nor can we more suitably, and seasonably fill up that holy day, than with a thankful *Commemoration* of the triumphant *Resurrection* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*; and let us throw in too, all the particular *Victories*, which our *Redeemer* has won over the *Kingdom of Satan*, and *Antichrist*.

2. I readily grant, that holy Joy is an individual Companion of holy Praise, and well suited to that holy day.

3. Nor can it be denied, that some sort of rejoycing, or outward signs, expressions, and testimonies of the inward Joy in God, and Praise unto God, are agreeable to that day, and the duties of it; such are *Psalms*, and *Hymns*, and *Spiritual Songs*, singing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord, Gal. 3. 16.

4. And there are other lawful expressions of our joy and rejoycing, which the usage and custom of several Nations have found out, and applied to this end; such as may be Illuminations, Bone fires, Ringing of Bells, Fireworks, the dislodging of Guns, and whatever other innocent expressions of joy may be in practice.

5. But yet great care, caution and conscience, ought to be applied in the using of these arbitrary expressions of our joy; as whether they be not inconsistent with, and destructive of the solemn worship of the Lords day: If they shall divert us from holy meditation upon that holy word, which we have heard upon that holy day; if they shall interfere with that worship we owe to God in our Families, and in our more secret retirements.

6. There are some expressions of Rejoycing, which upon any other day be sinful, or become so, as they are ordinarily practised; wherein

wherein the lusts of men are apparently gratified, excited, and inflamed; and to which no Rules of Moderation were ever yet effectually prescribed.

7. And there are some which seem to be the contrivance of the Devil to advance his Kingdom and Interest; such as drinking of Healths; in which tho some critical Divines can divide the sin, from the things in the notion and speculation; yet as the custom has obtained upon times of profuse indulgence to rejoicing we see that in fact, God is dishonoured, the creatures are shamefully abused, the souls of men are brutified.

Let therefore all that fear God be cautious; our Bonafires may kindle such a fierce fire of wrath, that all our tears cannot quench it; and whilst we are ringing our Bells so unseasonably, God can make us ring 'em backwards. Retire we therefore to our Families, and there bless and praise God for his great mercies, and let us not be partakers of other mens sins, lest incensed Justice turn our thanksgivings into mournings, and we prepare work for days of Humiliation by our carnal, vain, and unsanctified Rejoycings.

2. *Direction.* Let us well understand, and keep fixt in our eye; the true reasons of our thanksgivings to God on the behalf of our Kings, and all that are in Authority; and there are two great ones mention'd.

1. That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, *ἡσυχίαν καὶ ἡρεσίαν*. The former word denotes a *Mind* disposed to peace, composedness, and rest; for all the world will be stormy without us, if we be not of a calm temper within. The other denotes, a posture and state of things secure from disturbances abroad: Bless we therefore our God that in any degree we are, and pray that we still more may be, *Delivered out of the hands of our enemies, that we may serve him without fear all the days of our lives*, Luke 1. 74. The less cause we have slavishly to fear men, the more reason we have religiously to fear our God.

2. That this quiet and peaceable life may be spent in all *godliness and honesty*. The end of a just War is an honourable Peace; the
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end of that Peace is Godliness. Shall we make a war with heaven, because God has indulged us a Peace on earth? Are we therefore worse to our God, because he's better to us? Do we thus requite the Lord? Peace without godliness is but a confederacy against the Almighty. As therefore we may sit down under our own Vine, lets also sit down under the shadow of Christ, that his fruit may be sweet to us: Let not therefore our Peace, when ever God shall restore it, prove the Mother of Luxury, Riot, and Carnal Security, nor the Nurse of Idleness; but let it teach us to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world, *Ti. 2.*

3. *Direction.* Let us endeavour to get all our deliverances, all our mercies so rooted and fixt in our hearts, that our praises may not be the work of a day, but the business of our lives. It was recorded as the great reproach of *Israel*, *Psal. 106. 12, 13. They sang his Praise. They soon forgot his Works!* The words refer evidently to their deliverance at the *Red Sea*, *Exod. 15. 1.* where, while the mercies were recent and fresh upon their minds and memories, they were lifted up in Praises at that rate, that had we seen and heard them, we must have concluded their Rejoicings reacht heaven, and would terminate there; and yet they had sojourned but two or three days in the *Wilderness*, but the sense of the Mercy was worn out, and they are murmuring, repining, and provoking their God. Such are we prone to be! To sing the praise of God one day, and curse him the next. And that not because fresher calamities have overtaken us, to obliterate the sense, and efface the impressions of late salvations, but from a strange frame of spirit, that cools, and dies over the mercies, that we cannot without special grace watch unto prayer, and praise one hour.

O pray therefore, that the same God who has given us cause, would also give us hearts to praise him; and that in an abiding sense of his never failing goodness may live, as well as speak his praises for ever.

4. *Direction.* Whilst we are enjoying the comforts of these salvations God has vouchsafed to us, and are giving due honour to the instruments which the Sovereign Goodness has used, or shall

shall use in procuring them, let us not rob God of his peculia and deserved glory : Let our King, and all under him, have their due, but be sure that God have his ! How easily does God dispense his favours to those that diligently seek him, but still he reserves the glory to himself, and will not part with it to another.

Nor can we doubt but that the King, and all that have fought under him, will chearfully join with us whilst we pray.

Psal. 115. 1. Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give glory, for thy Mercy and Truths sake !

Let it therefore abide upon the imagination of the thoughts of all our hearts, to maintain our prayer in vigor for the King and all that are in Authority, with affectionate thanksgivings to the God who has served his gracious counsels of them, in working our deliverance for us, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, *Amen.*

F I N I S.

1866
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council, viz.:

1. Mr. J. H. [illegible]
2. Mr. [illegible]

3. Mr. [illegible]

4. Mr. [illegible]
5. Mr. [illegible]
6. Mr. [illegible]
7. Mr. [illegible]
8. Mr. [illegible]
9. Mr. [illegible]
10. Mr. [illegible]
11. Mr. [illegible]
12. Mr. [illegible]
13. Mr. [illegible]
14. Mr. [illegible]
15. Mr. [illegible]
16. Mr. [illegible]
17. Mr. [illegible]
18. Mr. [illegible]
19. Mr. [illegible]
20. Mr. [illegible]
21. Mr. [illegible]
22. Mr. [illegible]
23. Mr. [illegible]
24. Mr. [illegible]
25. Mr. [illegible]
26. Mr. [illegible]
27. Mr. [illegible]
28. Mr. [illegible]
29. Mr. [illegible]
30. Mr. [illegible]
31. Mr. [illegible]
32. Mr. [illegible]
33. Mr. [illegible]
34. Mr. [illegible]
35. Mr. [illegible]
36. Mr. [illegible]
37. Mr. [illegible]
38. Mr. [illegible]
39. Mr. [illegible]
40. Mr. [illegible]
41. Mr. [illegible]
42. Mr. [illegible]
43. Mr. [illegible]
44. Mr. [illegible]
45. Mr. [illegible]
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89. Mr. [illegible]
90. Mr. [illegible]
91. Mr. [illegible]
92. Mr. [illegible]
93. Mr. [illegible]
94. Mr. [illegible]
95. Mr. [illegible]
96. Mr. [illegible]
97. Mr. [illegible]
98. Mr. [illegible]
99. Mr. [illegible]
100. Mr. [illegible]

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